1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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SOCIAL CUSTOMS.

600 The Gros Ventre system of terms of relationship has been given in a 605 former publication.[1]

604 Cousins, so far as the relationship was known, were called brothers and sisters, and they called each other's children son or daughter if the cousin [582] was of the same sex as the speaker, or nephew or niece if the cousin was of [587] the opposite sex. Any known relationship was a bar to marriage. The brother of a dead man sometimes married his widow, but this was not always the case.

583 Large amounts of property, especially horses, were given away for wives for the honor of the act, but there was no rule or definite custom covering the quantity of property so given. The horses might be given not only to the father, but to the brothers, uncles, and other relatives of the girl. Sometimes, without having received any gifts and apparently without any previous understanding, a man would give his daughter to a young man, who thereupon would give him horses, or distribute them among his wife's other relatives. Old men practised this custom in order to obtain the aid and services of a young man in caring for their horses and in other ways, and no doubt 585 sometimes also to insure a more certain food-supply. A young man on 431 marrying received a tent with all the proper furniture, usually from his prospective parents-in-law, but sometimes from his own parents, if they were the wealthier.

606 Although a young married man often lived with his father-in-law, the [591] well-known taboo custom between mother-in-law and son-in-law — which forbade their speaking, looking at each other, or being in the same tent — existed among the Gros Ventre. There was, however, no father-in-law taboo. The mother-in-law taboo extended to the son-in-law's brother.

584 If a woman did not wish a man for her lover, she might send him to do a 721 certain act of bravery. If he returned successfully from war, having accomplished the deed, he was then accepted. This custom is said to have led to the death of many young men.

428 At a person's death his property was inherited generally by his relatives. His father and mother, brothers, sisters, and children would receive part. His father and mother received the most. A man often disposed of his property before his death. If he died suddenly, as on being killed in war, his parents divided his property. It was not customary for a man on going to war to divide his property among his relatives in the contingency of his [764] death. Property particularly valued by the dead person was buried with him.

[1] Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. XVIII, Part I, pp. 9, 160.

added prestige. Those mentioned as leading bands above were seemingly the most numerous and most prominent in the recent past, and their representatives are more numerous at the present time. While the Frozens, Upper Quarters and Bad Plenty have the most living descendants, apparently there are no Poor Greys or Coffees today, only one Night Hawk, and a few each of the others.

Although Coming Daylight and Singer claimed membership in the Frozen band, they had no false modesty in proclaiming: "The Frozens were the best workers, had the biggest lodges, the prettiest women and the best-looking men. In fact they were the 'aristocratic' families, being the best-dressed and having the most horses." This was confirmed voluntarily by Cora who stated that she belonged to the Same As Assiniboines, but had heard all her life that the Frozens were the most distinguished band along the lines the old women mentioned. The men informants admitted that some bands were considered better in some respects than others, but failed to be more specific, and added that regardless of the reputation of the whole band, an individual man had to make his own way.

It is somewhat difficult to arrive at the exact situation as to band affiliation and exogamy inasmuch as the band ceased to function not long after our oldest male informants were born. Our oldest female informants, whose memory includes the 1860's, stated in regard to this individual or that, whom they mentioned, that they could not remember to which band he had belonged. In fact the old women became quite impatient when questioned on this subject since from their point of view it was not important. To them the question of marriage regulations was a practical one of avoiding as mate any person to whom blood relationship could be traced, no matter how remotely, and any affinal relative not of the same generation.

There was general agreement among all informants, however, that under normal circumstances children were of the same band as their father.[1] Nevertheless, residence was an important factor, and not a few persons claimed affiliation with bands other than those into which they had been born. Coming Daylight, for instance, said she was a Frozen, the band to which her mother had

[1] Cf. Kroeber, 1908, p. 147.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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621 belonged. She was orphaned at an early age and was raised by
597 her maternal grandmother under the protection of her mother's brother, Crow Bull, a prominent member of the Frozen band. Garter Snake claimed to be a Tendon, likewise the band into which her mother had been born, although her father, Bull Lodge, a so-called "Hudson Bay Company breed," was classed as a Frozen. If a child were adopted by, and remained during his childhood days with, a family of another band than that into which his real father had been born, he became a member of the adopting band. For instance, Lame Bull adopted a boy whose father belonged to a different band, but the boy was always known as a member of Lame Bull's band, the Upper Quarters.

[597] One informant stated that when a woman married she became a
621 member of her husband's band, but this statement refers in all probability merely to the fact that patrilocal residence was often practiced. Each of our older women informants stated as her band the one in which she grew up. When speaking of their husbands, these women, each of whom had survived several mates, seldom mentioned their band affiliations, unless asked specifically, nor did they mention to which of the soldier societies their several husbands had belonged. One gathers the very distinct impression
[602] that the kinship bonds were the all-important social relationships so far as Gros Ventres women were concerned, and that the wider political and social groupings did not impinge very directly on their lives.

621 All informants stated that one should not marry into the band
582 in which he claimed membership and in which he was brought up. There was a difference of opinion among them, however, as to whether one might marry into his mother's band providing he had not been raised therein and no blood relationship could be traced.[3] The Boy stated positively that a man who would so much as flirt with a young woman of his mother's band would be disliked. Charles Buckman differed, holding that any marriage would be proper, providing the far-reaching incest taboos based on blood and affinal relationship be observed. The Boy admitted that, because of changes which occurred in band affiliation, occasionally a person would take a wife from some other band than that of either

[3] Kroeber, 1908, p. 147, prohibition of marriage extended to mother's clan.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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was Keeper of the Crow Belt, as he had taken Gertrude and camped at the Mission. The next morning the couple was married by the priest and Gertrude's father brought the buggy full of goods and gave them all that, including the team of horses. Everybody could see that this couple started off with a lot."

Instead of making arrangements, a man might simply send his daughter to become the wife of another man without forewarning him. The recipient of such a bride could not well refuse her and was supposed to act as though he were happy to have her, regardless of how many other wives he might have or his real feelings in the matter. He, too, would normally give some kind of present to her father, the amount depending somewhat on the previous reputation of the bride. On the one side, she might have been given merely to get her off her father's hands, on the other, she might have been highly desirable as a wife and her father would have taken this means to show generosity on his own part and to honor the husband he had selected.

Sometimes elopements occurred, but this was very rarely if ever the case, so far as the girl was concerned, until she had been given at least once in marriage arranged by her relatives. Should a married woman run off with another man, it was up to her husband to deal with the situation. If, however, she had been widowed or divorced, and eloped before another marriage had been arranged, her relatives would be angry, but the affair could be patched up if the usual presents to them were forthcoming from the man.

There was no hard and fast rule in regard to residence. Matrilocal residence in the same lodge was incompatible with the observance of the mother-in-law taboo and it was said that if a man wished his son-in-law to remain with him, he provided the separate lodge and all the equipment.[7] The tendency seems to have been toward patrilocal residence in general, although it was not unusual for a couple to move back and forth. Coming Daylight lived most of her married life with her husband's people. As a child-bride she first lived in the lodge with her husband's parents; later on she and her husband went to her people, living with her

[7] Obligations between kin are discussed pp. 109–10. Kroeber, 1908, p. 180, states that a young married man often lived with his father-in-law.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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grandmother while her uncle's wives were making a lodge which they gave to her; then they went back and her new lodge was the sixth in a row, the five others being those of her husband's relatives who habitually camped together. When this husband died, she was claimed by a classificatory brother of her husband's and remained with the same people. This marriage did not last very long and, when her uncle arranged another marriage, again she lived near the man's relatives rather than her own. Since this too was of short duration, she remarried another time and lived in the same lodge as her husband's mother and unmarried brothers, until, at the time the Gros Ventre settled down (after 1883), her husband got a farm of his own and his mother went to live with one of her daughters.

Relations between Co-Wives

Subsidiary wives were known as "helpers" to the senior wife and co-wives addressed each other as "rival," unless they were related to each other and employed the ordinary form of address as "sister."[8] The senior wife distributed the household tasks and the "helpers" were allotted the heavier work, which usually included the procuring of fuel and water. Nevertheless all women were expected to be industrious and the senior wife as a rule enjoyed no more leisure or freedom than the others. In explaining the situation, Cora referred to her mother's experience. "My mother was always that kind of 'helper' but she didn't seem to mind it. After all, there were so many women who were 'helpers' and, as long as they got their work done, it didn't seem to matter who was 'boss' and who was 'helper.' They used to say in fact that some women preferred to be 'helpers' because while doing their jobs like going after water, they would have a chance to get away by themselves for a while—their husbands couldn't keep such close watch over them."

One of the advantages of living in a polygynous household was

[8] The Gros Ventre word for subsidiary wives, *atsd'anhiniya*, although at present sometimes translated as "slaves" as well as "helpers," is etymologically the same as the term applied to younger men who were appointed on ceremonial occasions to act as "waiters" for the principal performers. The term *inl'isag*, "rival," was used between co-wives who were not kin.